(c) whether any long-term plan has been formulated by his Ministry to make the industry's presence felt in the large International market and the expanding domestic market; if so, its broad features and if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF FOOD PROCESSING INDUSTRIES (SHRI TARUN GOGOI): (a). Yes, Sir.

(b) and (c) With a view to encourage investment in the food processing sector including fruits & vegetable processing sector, Government, besides declaring this sector as a priority industry, have de-licensed this sector and provided fiscal concession in capital goods and exempted the fruits and vegetable products from excise duty. It has also allowed automatic approval for technology agreements, foreign equity investment upto 51% within specified norms. Higher foreign equity investment are also allowed on a case to case basis. Government is also implementing various Plan schemes to promote post-harvest infrastructure for export and domestic market. Certain Plan schemes of the Government also aim at enhancement of processing capabilities, awareness and thereby market expansion of certain fruits & vegetable products, research & development and quality control facilities, etc. Agricultural and Processed Food Products Export Development Authority is trying to encourage exports by arranging participations in the international exhibitions in India and abroad besides organising buyer-seller meets and promotion of fruits & vegetables and their products abroad.

Manufacture of soft drinks concentrate by M/s. Phillip of US

2494. SHRI G.Y. KRISHNAN: Will the Minister of FOOD PROCESSING INDUSTRIES be pleased to state:

(a) whether yet another US based beverage giant M/s. Phillip Morris who is keen to enter India, has proposed to set up a wholly-owned subsidiary for the manufacture of soft drink concentrate;

(b) whether the Foreign Investment Promotion Board (FIPB) has since cleared this proposal; if so, on what terms and conditions;

(c) what is its impact on the soft drinks industry in India-both foreign and indigenous; and

(d) what is Government's present thinking on permitting foreign soft drinks firms to set up their ventures in India-wholly owned or in collaboration with the Indian Companies?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF FOOD PROCESSING INDUSTRIES (SHRI TARUN GOGOI): (a). Yes, Sir.

(b) No, Sir.

(c) Does not arise in view of (b) above.

(d) The soft drinks industry is delicensed. Each proposal for manufacture of soft drinks, received from a foreign company for setting up a wholly-owned subsidiary or a joint venture with an Indian company is examined on merits.

Assistance to fruit and vegetable-based industries in Gujarat

2495. SHRI KANAKSINH MOHANSINH MANGROLA: Will the Minister of FOOD PROCESSING INDUSTRIES be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are providing assistance to the fruit and vegetable based industries in various districts of Gujarat;